

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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C O N F I D E N T I A L THESSALONIKI 0743

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GR

SUBJECT: LOCAL CENTER UNION CAMPAIGN

REF: THESSALONIKI 667

1. DURING FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION NOVEMBER 14 WITH CONGEN OFFICER, LOCAL CU CANDIDATE DINGAS-CHARDALIAS PROVIDED FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT OF PARTY'S PROSPECTS IN THIS AREA.

2. OF 12 SEATS IN THESSALONIKI A DISTRICT, CU ANTICIPATES UNITED LEFT LIKELY TAKE TWO, PASOK ONE, AND NEW DEMOCRACY AND CU WILL DIVIDE REMAINDER ABOUT EQUALLY. DINGAS PERSONALLY HOPES TO PLACE SECOND ON LOCAL CU SLATE BEHIND EX-DEPUTY MANAVIS, BUT NOTED THAT THERE FEW CERTAINTIES IN THESS CAMPAIGN.

3. ON NATIONAL BASIS, DINGAS ESTIMATES PASOK AND UNITED LEFT WILL GARNER UP TO 30 PERCENT OF POPULAR VOTE, WITH REMAINDER GOING TO NEW DEMOCRACY AND CENTER UNION. LOCAL CU CANDIDATES NOW BEGINNING TO PULL VOTERS AWAY FROM PASOK, AND DINGAS SPECULATED THAT WERE CAMPAIGN TO RUN ANOTHER WEEK, PAPANDREOU BALLOON WOULD BE DEFLATED. AS IT IS, HE BELIEVES ONLY FRACTION OF PASOK SUPPORTERS ARE LIKELY TO ACTUALLY VOTE.

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4. MAJOR QUESTION FOR CU IS WHETHER PASOK ATTAINS NECESSARY 17 PERCENT FOR SECOND DISTRIBUTION. DINGAS NOTED THAT, ACCORDING TO ESTIMATE BY CU HEADQUARTERS, KARAMANLIS LOSING IN ATHENS AND SPECULATED THAT, EVEN IF ONLY TWO PARTIES REACH SECOND DISTRIBUTION, NEITHER WILL GAIN MAJORITY OF SEATS. IN SUCH CASE, DINGAS PREDICTED THAT CU WOULD REFUSE TO FORM COALITION WITH KARAMANLIS IN ORDER TO DENY PAPANDREOU LEADING OPPOSITION ROLE. IN SUCH EVENT, KARAMANLIS MIGHT WITHDRAW AND CU WOULD CALL FOR GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY WITH PARTICIPATION OF ALL PARTIES.

5. COMMENT: CONGEN BELIEVES DINGAS ESTIMATE OF HIS OWN AND LOCAL CU PROSPECTS PROBABLY OPTIMISTIC. ALTHOUGH HIS FATHER PROMINENT MINISTER UNDER VENIZELOS AND HE HAS SOME LIBERAL FOLLOWING, OBSERVERS NOTE THAT REPUTATION FOR WEALTH AND HEAVY CAMPAIGN SPENDING WILL PROBABLY COST HIM SOME VOTES. WHILE HE REPORTEDLY CLOSE TO MAVROS, IT UNCLEAR WHETHER COMMENTS ABOVE ON DIM PROSPECTS FOR ND-CU COALITION REFLECT VIEWS OF PARTY'S NATIONAL LEADERS.

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